



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



James E. Hartl, AICP  
Director of Planning

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

**DATE:** April 11, 2005

**PROJECT TITLE:** Liberty Canyon  
Project No. 99-077  
Tentative Tract No. 52909  
ROAKT200400029  
RENV200400028  
(Conditional Use Permit)

**PROJECT APPLICANT(s):** Samson Investment Company  
4505 Las Virgenes Road, Suite 210  
Calabasas, California 91302

The County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning is the lead agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified below. In compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County of Los Angeles is sending this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to each responsible and federal agency and interested parties involved in approving the project and to trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the project. Within 30 days after receiving the NOP, each agency shall provide the County of Los Angeles with specific written details about the scope and content of the environmental information related to that agency's area of statutory responsibility.

The purpose of this NOP is to solicit the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory authority with respect to the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering approval of applicable permits for the project.

**PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The 161.17-acre project site is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County, immediately north of the Interstate 101, between Lost Hills Road and Liberty Canyon Road, within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan area (see Figure 1). The site is bordered to the east by a residential community (Saratoga Hills); to the north by the Calabasas Sanitary Landfill; to the west by open space owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the National Park Service; and to the south by a daycare center, a religious school and Interstate 101 (see Figure 2).

The project site is primarily vacant and without permanent structures. Historically, the site has been used for the grazing of livestock. Some informal trails are found on the site. In the southwest corner of the site there are several empty horse trailers and dogs in kennels. In the northwest corner of the site there are landfill monitoring wells.

The project site consists of hilly terrain with slope gradients ranging up to 50 percent. Onsite elevations range from 1,200 feet in the northern portion of the site to 830 feet in the central and eastern portions of the site. The central portion of the site is relatively flat. Slopes rise steadily to over 1,000 feet in the southern portion of the site. To the north, the gradient increases more sharply to 1,200 feet.

Vegetation on the site consists of a mosaic of annual non-native grassland/annual weeds, and Venturan coastal sage scrub. Additional plant assemblages include mule fat scrub, southern willow scrub, and a small saltgrass swale. Much of the site has been disturbed by long-term livestock grazing. Isolated mature oak trees are present on the site. The project site also includes a portion of a potentially viable wildlife movement corridor between the Simi Hills and the Santa Monica Mountains. The intermittent creek in the western portion of the site supports a riparian habitat.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The proposed project consists of the development of 23 single-family residences with lot sizes ranging from 87,120 square feet (s.f.) to 168,021 s.f. The proposed single-family residences will be located in the central portion of the 161.17 acre site, approximately following the lowest relief. Proposed primary vehicular access will be from Canwood Street to the south at Liberty Canyon Road. An emergency second means of access will connect to DeBerry Drive to the east (see Figure 3, full size map). The proposed grading, which will be balanced onsite, will affect approximately 53.2 acres and will involve approximately 800,000 cubic yards, including the offsite grading to connect the primary access road (approximately 4,200 feet in length) to Canwood Street. The project will connect to existing water and sewer lines in the adjacent subdivision to the east.

**ENTITLEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND DISCRETIONARY APPROVALS:** The proposed project is an application for: 1) Tentative Tract Map No. 52909 to subdivide the subject property into 23 single family residential lots (with approximately 104 acres remaining as open space), 2) Oak Tree Permit (ROAKT200400029) to encroach upon the protection zone of four onsite oak trees, and 3) Conditional Use Permit for grading exceeding 100,000 cubic yards. A Hillside Management CUP may be required upon additional review of slope analysis to protect the quality of stream, ground and coastal waters.

**POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPACTS:** The County of Los Angeles, as the Lead Agency, has identified in the Initial Study (see attachment) the following potential environmental impacts which will be discussed in the EIR:

- **Geotechnical Hazards** – the California State Seismic Hazard Zone Map (Calabasas Quad) indicates the project site is potentially subject to liquefaction and earthquake induced landslides; the project will involve the grading of 800,000 cubic yards of grading on slopes with gradients in excess of 25%; according to the Los Angeles County Safety Element Map, the project site is located in an area containing a major (5-100 acre) landslide; the project site is located in an area having high slope instability.
- **Flood Hazards** – a major drainage course, as identified on the USGS Calabasas quad sheet by a dashed line, is located on the project site; the project site may be located within or contains a floodway, floodplain, or designated flood hazard zone; the project could contribute or be subject to high erosion and debris deposition from runoff; the project may alter tributary drainages by paving and storm water runoff drainage structures.

- Fire Hazards – the project site is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; the project site may be served by inadequate access due to the lengths, width, surface materials, turnarounds or grade; the project site may be in an area having inadequate water and pressure to meet fire flow standards; the project site is located in close proximity to potential fire hazards conditions/uses such as refineries, flammables, explosives manufacturing.
- Noise Hazards – the project site is located near high noise sources: 101 Freeway and the Calabasas Sanitary Landfill; the project site is located in close proximity to noise sensitive uses: a daycare facility and religious school.
- Water Quality – the project's associated construction activities will significantly impact the quality of groundwater and/or storm water runoff to the storm water conveyance system and or receiving water bodies; the project's post-development activities could potentially degrade the quality of storm water runoff and/or its post-development non-storm water discharges could contribute potential pollutants to the storm water conveyance system and/or receiving bodies.
- Air Quality – the project site is in close proximity to the Calabasas Landfill, a source that may create obnoxious odors, dust, and/or hazardous emissions; the project's grading of 800,000 cubic yards may violate the PM10 standard or contribute substantially to an existing or project air quality violation; the project may result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant due to its location in a non-attainment air basin.
- Biota – the project site is relatively undisturbed and natural; SEA 12 is located north of the site; grading will disturb approximately 53 acres of coastal sage scrub and non-native grassland; the Liberty Canyon drainage, a blue dashed line on the USGS Calabasas quad sheet, located on the western edge of the project site; the project site contains southern mixed riparian and coastal sage scrub habitat; the project site contains nine valley oak trees; the project site may contain habitat for Catalina mariposa and Lyon's pentachaeta; the project site is adjacent to open space linkage and a wildlife corridor to the west.
- Cultural Resources – there are 13 known sites within a one mile radius of the project site and there are a drainage course and oak trees on the project site; Ranch Pet Kennels is a known historic site on the southern portion of the project site; the 1998 cultural survey completed by (McKenna et al) indicated there is the potential for buried deposits on the project site.
- Visual Qualities – the project site is substantially visible from the Ventura Freeway, a scenic corridor; the project site is an undisturbed area adjacent to the Saratoga Hills residential development; the project will require extensive grading and landform alteration.
- Traffic/Access – the project site contains 23 dwelling units and is located near the congested Highway 101; potentially inadequate access to/from the project site during an emergency (other than fire hazards) may result in problems for emergency vehicles or residents in the area.
- Sewage Disposal – the proposed 23 new housing units may create capacity problems at the Tapia Water Reclamation Plan; the 23 new housing units may create capacity problems in the sewer lines serving the project site.
- Education – the project could create capacity problems at the district and individual school levels, since schools are currently operating over capacity; the project could create substantial library impacts due to increased population and demand.
- Fire/Sheriff Services – the project could create staffing or response time problems at the fire station or sheriff's substation serving the project site.
- Utilities – the Calabasas Landfill is near full capacity.

- Environmental Safety – there is a religious school to the south of the project site; the project site is located within two miles downstream of a known groundwater contamination source within the same watershed: project site is downstream of the Calabasas Landfill.
- Land Use – the project site may conflict with the Hillside Management goals and policies of the Los Angeles County North Area Plan

In addition to evaluating the potential effects of the proposed project, the EIR will address a full range of project alternatives, possibly including, but not necessarily restricted to: a “no project” alternative, a reduced density alternative and an alternate site plan.

## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION REVIEW AND COMMENTS**

The review period for the Notice of Preparation will be from April 13, 2005 to May 13, 2005. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than **May 20, 2005**. Please direct all written comments to the following address. In your written response, please include the name of a contact person in your agency.

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